

THIS MONTH: DECEMBER 2007

RIDGEWAY METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Friends

The cult of celebrity and entertainment

A recent poll conducted by the Fabian Society revealed that the British public believes that the Prime Minister should be paid more than Premier League footballers. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister would take an annual pay cut from £187,000 to £135,000 but, according to the public, the leading Premier League footballers should be paid £62,000 per year. This would come as a shock to the average Premier League footballer who is paid £676,000 a year and no doubt gains a lot of extra income from advertising deals.

Many of you will know that I am a football fan. Actually, I don't think the Prime Minister is overpaid but I think that Premiership footballers should be earning in a year what many of them are demanding for a week. The same is true for many celebrities, especially those in the world of television and entertainment. There has to be something wrong in our society when we are paying a vast number of entertainers more in a week than surgeons, doctors and nurses get paid in a year. It is all part of the culture of celebrity and entertainment.

When television programmes the *Weakest Link*, *Who wants to be a millionaire?* and *Big Brother* needed something to boost their audience ratings it seems that the answer was to have *Celebrity Weakest Link*, *Celebrity Millionaire*, *Celebrity Big Brother*. Saturday evening TV choices include watching celebrities learning (or failing to learn) how to dance (*Strictly Come Dancing*) or young (and sometimes not so young) hopefuls competing to become celebrities through that public audition known as *The X-factor*. If television schedules are crammed with celebrities, magazines and newspapers are no different. Apparently the public wants to know what dresses Posh Spice is modelling and what perfume *Old Spice* is wearing.

As we are surrounded by the culture of celebrity and entertainment we must be careful not to allow these ideas to seep into the church. For my entire ministry (now in its twenty-fifth year) many people have advocated services that are lively. The statement, 'if only we had services that were livelier people would come' sounds pretty reasonable and of course, add in a few Christian celebrities and that is obviously the key to success. Clearly 'lively' is better than 'dull' but what we should be striving for is practising the Christian faith, which inevitably includes gathering together for the services, in a way that has the hallmarks of sincerity and reality about them. At Christmastime I am hoping that our services will be lively, not dull, but let's make sure that we are not about entertainment but about spiritual reality – spiritual reality that is found in Jesus.

A special hello to an avid reader

One of the most avid readers of this news-sheet is our oldest member, Mrs Vera Giles, who recently celebrated her 101st birthday. I am sure that Vera would have me send her greetings to you all but on behalf of the church community I am also able to send our greetings to Vera. I meet Vera each month for our communion service in her home and often discover that Vera seems to know more that is happening in our church community than I do.

Pre-school news

After 17 years working in our pre-school, most recently as lead practitioner and supervisor, Mrs Sue Tozer has decided that the time has come for her to move on from pre-school. Sue very kindly took me into her confidence and asked if I would write her a reference for a new position, one which hopefully will not require her to crawl around the floor with energetic little ones and complete vast amounts of paperwork. Sue kindly wrote to me and thanked me for my support in my five years as minister and chairman of the pre-school management committee but I am sure that thanks is extended to a great number of people who have worked in and supported the pre-school past and present. I am also confident that the whole church community, including pre-school children and parents from the last 17 years will want to extend their special gratitude to Sue and to wish her well in her new job.

Two busy months

November was a busy month in the life of the church. The month began with our gift day, where our main aim was to raise money for new floor coverings in those parts of our building where they have become very worn. A total of just over £2,000 was given. The following week, Remembrance Sunday, included an exceptionally good audio-visual presentation. We also had a good weekend for our Memorial Service with a concert on the Saturday and a Sunday service with special guests, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Plymouth and the Plympton Stannator and her husband, joining the bereaved families. Those who worked hard in every way including providing the first class refreshments deserve our gratitude. The music of singer/songwriter Marilyn Baker and the ministry of her team were widely appreciated, including a brief visit to Pocklington Rise Home for the Blind. The retiring collection at the Memorial Service raised £163.00 for this year's charity, the *British Heart Foundation*.

Christmas will soon be on us and there is a variety of services and special events in the church which I am not going to mention here because they are listed in the diary and on the separate leaflets and publicity that we produce for Christmas. However, I do want to encourage you to bring your own family, friends and guests to share with us in these services so that they can encounter the true message of the Saviour born who is Christ the Lord.

In the New Year we are holding a Burns' Night at the Boringdon Hall Hotel on Friday 18 January at 7.15 for 7.45 pm. Revd Alen McCulloch, Royal Naval Chaplain from HMS Drake will be sharing some of his thoughts with us before taking up his new post in

Basra, Iraq. This evening is exceptionally good value at £17.50 and booking is essential. It really helps us if you book early.

God bless

John Haley

NATIVITY CELEBRATION

Pre-school invite you to join them at their Nativity Celebrations on Wednesday 12 December at 10.30 am in the Church.

CONGRATULATIONS

In 1947 Harley Green married Kathleen, their vows were made in the sight of God on 27 December. On 27 December 2007 they celebrate their Diamond Wedding, sharing a life time together trusting in the Lord. Everyone at Ridgeway would like to join Harley and Kathleen as they give thanks to God for 60 years spent in love.

December Diary

Saturday 1:

8.30 am Prayer Meeting
10.00-12.30 Oasis Coffee Bar: Outreach (Christine & Lydia)

Sunday 2:

10.30 am Revd John Haley (Communion)
7.00 pm Mr Brian Hart

Monday 3:

7.30 pm Minister's Bible study (Christian Doctrine 10)

Tuesday 4:

10.00-12.30 Patchwork Group
7.30 pm Ladies' Group: Concert with Laura Youth Band and Soloist Cheryl Stead
7.30 pm Cross-talk (at Stoke) with Revd Doug Rix

Wednesday 5:

10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

Thursday 6:

2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Mrs Win Smith

Saturday 8:

10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Youth Outreach (Miriam, Kim & Steve)

Sunday 9:

10.30 am Revd John Carne & Revd John Haley
7.00 pm Revd John Haley & Revd Andrew Earl

Tuesday 11:

10.00-12.30 Patchwork Group
7.45 pm Ladies' Group: Patchwork Group

- Wednesday 12:
 10.00-12.30 Christmas Lunch
 10.30 am Pre-school Nativity in the church
- Thursday 13:
 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Revd John Haley (Carol Service)
- Saturday 15:
 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church Outreach (Pat Stead)
 4.30-7.00 pm Seasonal Concert at Millbrook Methodist Church
- Sunday 16:**
10.30 am Mr Jonny Libby
6.00 pm Revd John Haley: Candlelit Carols for all ages
- Tuesday 18:
 10.00-12.30 Patchwork Group
 2.45 pm Ladies' Group: Revd John Haley (Carol Service)
- Wednesday 19:**
4.30 pm Christingle Service
- Thursday 20:
 2.45 pm Women's Fellowship: Mrs Judith Goodridge
- Saturday 22:
 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: The Esther Benjamin Trust (Avril)
- Sunday 23:**
10.30 am Revd John Haley
6.00 pm Revd John Haley: Candlelit Favourite Carols
- CHRISTMAS EVE:**
11.15 pm Communion Service for Christmas Eve
- CHRISTMAS DAY:**
10.00 am All-Age Service for Christmas Day
- Saturday 29:
 10.00-12.00 Oasis Coffee Bar: Church funds: (Avril & Pamela)
- Sunday 30:**
10.30 am Mrs Janet Dobinson
6.00 pm Revd Doug Rix: Carols by Candlelight
- Wednesday 2 January:
 10.00-12.30 Coffee followed by lunches

The Church Office will be closed from noon on Friday 18 December and will reopen on Thursday 3 January.
 A very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2008 to all our readers.

Church office hours:
 Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Church telephones:
 348178 (office only)
 331186 (pre-school and hall)

Church Office: admin@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk
 Minister: The Revd John M Haley: min@ridgewaymethodist.org.uk
www.ridgewaymethodist.org.uk
 Information for January's *This Month* to the office by 18 December please.